

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BERLIN 01276 01 OF 05 211636Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 TRSE-00
IO-13 ACDA-12 CU-04 HA-05 BIB-01 COME-00 EB-08
LAB-04 SIL-01 /103 W
-----108037 211741Z /50

R 211601Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6766
INFO AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USIA WASHDC
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
USMISSION USBERLIN
USMISSION USNATO
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 05 BERLIN 01276

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, GE, GW
SUBJECT: WHAT DO EAST GERMANS THINK ABOUT THE SPIEGEL
"MANIFESTO" AND RUDOLF BAHRO?

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BERLIN 01276 01 OF 05 211636Z

REFS: (A) 77 BERLIN 06984 (B) 77 BERLIN 07021
(C) BERLIN 24 (D) BERLIN 202 (E) BERLIN 236
(F) BERLIN 312 (G) BERLIN 931

1. SUMMARY. BOTH THE SO-CALLED DISSIDENT "MANIFESTO"
PUBLISHED IN JANUARY BY DER SPIEGEL AND THE
WRITINGS OF IMPRISONED ECONOMIST AND MARXIST

THEORETICIAN RUDOLF BAHRO ARE PRIME TOPICS OF CONVERSATION AMONG POLITICALLY INTERESTED PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE GDR. BASED ON EMBASSY CONTACTS IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THE SUBSTANCE OF BOTH THE "MANIFESTO" AND BAHRO'S WRITINGS HAVE RECEIVED WIDE DISTRIBUTION AND ATTENTION AMONG UNIVERSITY EDUCATED PEOPLE AND THAT A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF GENERAL DISCUSSION REVOLVE AROUND THEM. THE CONSENSUS OF OPINION IS THAT THE "MANIFESTO" DID ORIGINATE WITHIN THE GDR, THAT IT REPRESENTS THE WORK OF ONE OR TWO SMALL GROUPS OF FRUSTRATED AND DISAFFECTED PARTY MEMBERS BUT THAT IT DOES NOT REFLECT ANY KIND OF ORGANIZED OPPOSITION TO THE PARTY OR STATE APPARATUS. THE "MANIFESTO" SEEMS TO BE GENERALLY REGARDED AS A "BITCH LIST" CONTAINING MANY COMMONLY HELD COMPLAINTS OF EAST GERMANS BUT BY NO MEANS REFLECTING THE BREADTH OF VIEWS OF THE EAST GERMAN POPULATION. FOR EXAMPLE, THE REUNIFICATION QUESTION IS GIVEN HIGHLY EXAGGERATED ATTENTION IN THE DOCUMENT WHILE TOPICS OF VERY BROAD POPULAR CONCERN, SUCH AS FREEDOM TO TRAVEL AND ACCESS TO WESTERN PUBLICATIONS, ARE GIVEN SHORT SHRIFT. HOWEVER, BASED ON OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH EAST GERMANS, IT NOW SEEMS APPARENT THAT THE WRITINGS OF RUDOLF BAHRO HAVE HAD A MUCH DEEPER AND MORE ENDURING IMPACT WITHIN POLITICALLY CONCERNED EAST GERMAN CIRCLES THAN HAS

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BERLIN 01276 01 OF 05 211636Z

THE "MANIFESTO". BAHRO'S ROLE HAS BEEN TO PROVIDE AN INTELLECTUALLY RESPECTABLE FOCUS FOR DISCUSSIONS OF THE SHORTCOMINGS OF SOCIALISM AS PRACTICED IN THE GDR AND TO HOLD OUT THE POSSIBILITY, HOWEVER REMOTE, THAT IDEOLOGICALLY COMMITTED SOCIALISTS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO A FUNDAMENTAL REFORM OF THE EAST GERMAN SYSTEM. WHILE THE "MANIFESTO" PRODUCED A MORE SENSATIONAL TREATMENT IN THE WEST GERMAN PRESS AND A STRONGER EAST GERMAN REACTION, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT BAHRO, REGARDLESS OF HIS PERSONAL FATE, MAY HAVE A MORE LASTING IMPACT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC IDEOLOGY IN THE GDR. END SUMMARY.

2. EAST GERMAN ACCESS TO THE "MANIFESTO" AND BAHRO. IN RECENT WEEKS EMBASSY OFFICERS HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN DISCUSSIONS WITH BOTH SEMI-OFFICIAL AND PRIVATE CONTACTS IN EAST BERLIN AND IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE GDR ON THE SUBJECTS OF THE SPIEGEL "MANIFESTO" AND THE WRITINGS AND IDEAS OF RUDOLF BAHRO, AUTHOR OF "THE ALTERNATIVE, A CRITIQUE OF REAL, EXISTING SOCIALISM". OUR CONTACTS HAVE BEEN ANYTHING BUT HESITANT TO DISCUSS THESE TOPICS; IN MOST INSTANCES,

THE EAST GERMANS INITIATE THE DISCUSSION OF THE
MANIFESTO AND BAHRO AND ARE PREPARED TO ENGAGE IN
LENGTHY AND SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS ON THE MERITS
OF THESE DISSIDENT DOCUMENTS. IT IS CLEAR THAT THE
BULK OF OUR CONTACTS, WHOARE MOSTLY UNIVERSITY
EDUCATED PEOPLE IN THE PROFESSIONS WITH A FAIRLY
HIGH LEVEL OF POLITICAL INTEREST AND AWARENESS,
HAVE CONSIDERABLY FAMILIARITY WITH BOTH THE
ORIGINAL WRITINGS AND WITH WESTERN COMMENTARIES ON
THEM. BAHRO'S "DIE ALTERNATIVE" IS AVAILABLE
EITHER IN ITS FULL ORIGINAL FORM, OR IN EXTRACTS
CONTAINED IN A PAPERBACK "DOCUMENTATION" ON BAHRO

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BERLIN 01276 02 OF 05 211649Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 TRSE-00
IO-13 ACDA-12 CU-04 HA-05 BIB-01 COME-00 EB-08
LAB-04 SIL-01 /103 W
-----108171 211741Z /50

R 211601Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6767
INFO AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USIA WASHDC
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
USMISSION USBERLIN
USMISSION USNATO
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 05 BERLIN 01276

ASSEMBLED BY THE WEST GERMAN PUBLISHER OF "DIE ALTERNATIVE" AND AS PRINTED IN TWO ISSUES OF DER SPIEGEL OR THROUGH RIAS BROADCASTS. GIVEN THE VERY DIFFICULT NATURE OF BAHRO'S WRITINGS, WHICH ARE HIGHLY COMPLEX IN BOTH THEIR IDEOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BERLIN 01276 02 OF 05 211649Z

DISCUSSIONS, IT IS OUR IMPRESSION THAT HE HAS MANAGED TO REACH A FAIRLY WIDE AUDIENCE AMONG POLITICALLY CONCERNED EAST GERMANS. THE SPIEGEL "MANIFESTO" IS MUCH SHORTER AND APPEARS TO BE GENERALLY OBTAINABLE IN EITHER PHOTOCOPY FORM OR IN TAPE RECORDINGS OF THE RIAS BROADCASTS OF THE TEXT. IF OUR CONVERSATIONS HAVE BEEN IN ANY WAY REPRESENTATIVE, THE INTEREST LEVEL CONCERNING THESE DOCUMENTS AMONG EDUCATED EAST GERMANS IS QUITE HIGH.

3. THE "MANIFESTO" ORIGINS. EVER SINCE ITS APPEARANCE, EAST GERMAN CONTACTS HAVE HELD DIVERSE VIEWS CONCERNING THE ORIGINS AND AUTHENTICITY OF THE "MANIFESTO". OUR OFFICIAL AND SEMI-OFFICIAL CONTACTS TEND TO FOLLOW THE REGIME'S LINE THAT THE DOCUMENT WAS THE WORK OF UNSPECIFIED "CIRCLES" IN THE FRG SEEKING TO SABOTAGE GDR/FRG RELATIONS AND GENERALLY TO UNDERMINE DETENTE. WE HAVE HEARD NO DIRECT ACCUSATIONS AIMED AT THE SCHMIDT GOVERNMENT; THE FINGERS ARE POINTED RATHER AT THE CDU/CSU OPPOSITION AND AT "CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS" WITHIN THE WEST GERMAN ESTABLISHMENT. SOME CONTACTS HAVE REFLECTED WHAT MAY BE A QUITE GENUINE FEAR OF RIGHT-WING FORCES IN THE FRG AND A CONCERN FOR THE FUTURE OF EAST-WEST RELATIONS IF THE ADMINISTRATION IN BONN SHOULD SHIFT TO THE CDU/CSU. THIS CONCERN MAY BE TO A LARGE EXTENT THE PRODUCT OF THE EAST GERMAN MEDIA'S OWN PREOCCUPATION WITH ALLEGED NEO-NAZI DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FRG AND THE OFFICIAL TENDENCY HERE TO PERCEIVE ANTI-GDR CONSPIRACIES AS RAMPANT IN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC. ON THE OTHER EXTREME ONE OF OUR CONTACTS HAS FIRMLY EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT SOME KIND OF

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BERLIN 01276 02 OF 05 211649Z

"UNDERGROUND" ACTUALLY DOES EXIST IN THE SED AND THAT THE "MANIFESTO" IS THE FIRST SALVO IN A SERIOUS MOVEMENT TO REFORM EAST GERMAN SOCIALISM

FROM WITHIN THE PARTY ITSELF. THIS CONTACT ALSO HOLDS STRONGLY ANTI-HONECKER VIEWS AND FEELS THAT ANY CHANGE IN THE CURRENT LEADERSHIP WOULD BE TO THE GOOD.

4. HOWEVER, AMONG OUR UNOFFICIAL CONTACTS THERE IS A FAIRLY CLEAR CONSENSUS ON THE "MANIFESTO." IN SUM: IT IS AN EAST GERMAN, NOT A WEST GERMAN WORK. IT IS PROBABLY NOT THE PRODUCT OF AN INTELLIGENCE SERVICE, EITHER EAST OR WEST. IT REPRESENTS THE WORK OF MORE THAN ONE AUTHOR, PERHAPS OF ONE OR TWO SMALL DISCUSSION GROUPS. THE AUTHORS ARE PROBABLY MEMBERS OF THE SED BUT ALMOST CERTAINLY NOT IN POLICY-MAKING POSITIONS. THE DOCUMENT CONTAINS FAR TOO MUCH DEROGATORY MATERIAL ABOUT THE LEADERSHIP TO HAVE BEEN AUTHORIZED OR EVEN CONDONED BY THE STATE SECURITY SERVICE. THE EXTREMELY HEAVY ANTI-SOVIET CONTENT OF THE "MANIFESTO" MAKES IT UNLIKELY THAT IT WAS SPONSORED BY HONECKER'S POSSIBLE OPPONENTS WITHIN THE LEADERSHIP, WHO WOULD NOT TAKE THE ENORMOUS RISK OF BEING DISCOVERED AS PART OF AN ANTI-MOSCOW FACTION. HOWEVER, ALTHOUGH PROBABLY THE GENUINE PRODUCT OF A SMALL NUMBER OF "COMRADES", THE "MANIFESTO" DOES NOT REPRESENT ANY KIND OF ORGANIZED OPPOSITION WITHIN THE SED. NO SUCH GROUPING COULD POSSIBLY ESCAPE THE DETECTION OF THE STATE SECURITY SERVICE AND NO SUCH MOVEMENT ON ANY SCALE WOULD OR COULD BE TOLERATED. THE DOCUMENT IS THEREFORE THE PRODUCT OF DISILLUSIONED, FRUSTRATED AND PERHAPS PROFESSIONALLY STYMIED PARTY FUNCTIONARIES WHO ARE ATTEMPTING TO SPUR THE CREATION OF THE KIND OF OPPOSITION THEY CLAIM TO REPRESENT. IT IS ALSO WORTH NOTING THAT MANY EAST GERMANS ARE QUICK TO POINT OUT THAT THE TERM "MANIFESTO" WAS NOT USED BY THE AUTHORS OF THE DOCUMENT BUT WAS APPLIED TO IT BY SPIEGEL'S EDITORS. THE USE OF THIS HIGHLY LOADED TERM AND THE SENSE-

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BERLIN 01276 03 OF 05 211704Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 TRSE-00
IO-13 ACDA-12 CU-04 HA-05 BIB-01 COME-00 EB-08
LAB-04 SIL-01 /103 W
-----108266 211741Z /50

R 211601Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6768
INFO AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USIA WASHDC
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
USMISSION USBERLIN
USMISSION USNATO
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 05 BERLIN 01276

TIONALIST CHARACTER OF SPIEGEL'S PRESENTATION OF THE
"MANIFESTO" HAVE, IF ANYTHING, TENDED TO REDUCE ITS CREDI-
BILITY AMONG INTERESTED EAST GERMANS. IN FACT, IT IS OUR
IMPRESSION THAT AT THE PRESENT TIME THERE IS FAR LESS
INTEREST IN THE "MANIFESTO" THAN IN BAHRO'S WRITINGS.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BERLIN 01276 03 OF 05 211704Z

5. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE "MANIFESTO".
THE CONTENTS OF THE "MANIFESTO" ATTRACT CONSIDERABLE
INTEREST AND DISCUSSION AMONG OUR CONTACTS, BUT NOT ALWAYS
OF A FAVORABLE KIND. FOR EXAMPLE, THE GREAT EMPHASIS ON
THE GERMAN REUNIFICATION QUESTION IN THE WORK HAS SIMPLY
BAFFLED MOST EAST GERMANS WITH WHOM WE HAVE SPOKEN; ALMOST
WITHOUT EXCEPTION OUR CONTACTS SAY THAT REUNIFICATION IS
NOT AN IMPORTANT OR EVEN CURRENT INTEREST TO THE GREAT
MAJORITY OF THE EAST GERMANS. IT HAS BEEN SPECULATED THAT
THE AUTHORS OF THE "MANIFESTO" MUST BE FAIRLY OLD SINCE
YOUNG AND MIDDLE-AGED EAST GERMANS SIMPLY DO NOT REGARD
REUNIFICATION AS A POSSIBLE OR EVEN A DESIRABLE PROSPECT.
THE GREAT ATTENTION GIVEN TO THIS ISSUE HAS THEREFORE
TENDED TO REDUCE THE APPEAL OF THE "MANIFESTO" HERE.
THERE IS A GENERAL FEELING THAT THE DOCUMENT IS MOSTLY A
LITANY OF COMPLAINTS, MANY QUITE VALID, BUT NOT A COMPRE-
HENSIVE OR IDEOLOGICALLY RIGOROUS CRITIQUE OF SOCIALISM IN
THE GDR. MANY OF THE PERSONAL CRITICISMS OF THE LEADERSHIP
AND THE FREQUENTLY GOSSIPY CHARACTER OF THE WORK HAVE
RECEIVED CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION BY EAST GERMANS BUT HAVE
SIMULTANEOUSLY REDUCED THE STATURE OF THE "MANIFESTO" AS A

SERIOUS ASSAULT ON THE SYSTEM. THE ALMOST VIRULENT ANTI-SOVIET CHARACTER OF THE DOCUMENT IS OFTEN DESCRIBED AS EXCESSIVE AND AS REPRESENTING A TENDENCY TO USE THE SOVIETS AS SCAPEGOATS FOR DEFICIENCIES IN THE EAST GERMAN SYSTEM. THERE ARE ALSO FREQUENT COMMENTS ON WHAT THE "MANIFESTO" DOES NOT COMPLAIN ABOUT. THE SCANT ATTENTION GIVEN TO THE VERY WIDESPREAD DESIRE FOR FREER TRAVEL AND MORE ACCESS TO WESTERN PUBLICATIONS HAS REDUCED THE VALIDITY OF THE "MANIFESTO" IN THE EYES OF MANY EAST GERMANS WITH WHOM WE HAVE SPOKEN. IN SUM, THE "MANIFESTO" IS OFTEN DESCRIBED AS AN INTERESTING AND PROVOCATIVE OUTBURST FROM

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BERLIN 01276 03 OF 05 211704Z

A SMALL GROUP OF PARTY MEMBERS BUT ALSO AS A DISORGANIZED AND NON-RIGOROUS TREATMENT OF PROBLEMS WHICH ARE FELT TO REQUIRE MORE SERIOUS AND SYSTEMATIC ATTENTION. THERE IS ALSO SOMETHING OF A VIEW THAT THE "MANIFESTO" AUTHORS ARE SED MEMBERS ON THE OUTSIDE OF THE POWER ELITE WHO WOULD PROBABLY BE AS BAD AS THE CURRENT LEADERSHIP IF THEY EVER CAME TO POWER THEMSELVES. THE FAIRLY WIDESPREAD IMPRESSION IS THEREFORE THAT THE "MANIFESTO" IS FIERY BUT SHALLOW, TOPICAL BUT NOT TO BE TAKEN TOO SERIOUSLY.

6. THE IMPACT OF THE "MANIFESTO".

IN THE WEEKS AFTER THE PUBLICATION OF THE "MANIFESTO" AND THE STRONG GDR OFFICIAL REACTION TO IT, SEVERAL OF OUR CONTACTS EXPRESSED SERIOUS CONCERN THAT THE INCIDENT WOULD SIGNIFICANTLY UNDERMINE FRG-GDR RELTIONS. MANY OF OUR CONTACTS EXHIBIT CONSIDERABLE SOPHISTICATION CONCERNING INTERNAL POLITICS IN THE FRG, DEVELOPED THROUGH WEST GERMAN TELEVISION AND RADIO BROADCASTS, AND ARE WELL AWARE OF THE CONTROVERSIES IN BONN CONCERNING THE "MANIFESTO", THE ABORTIVE KOHL VISIT TO EAST BERLIN, AND OTHER STRAINS ON INNER-GERMAN RELATIONS. THESE CONTACTS SEEM TO ACCEPT THAT THE GDR LEADERSHIP IS NOT SEEKING TO AGGRAVATE THE "MANIFESTO" ISSUE ANY FURTHER BUT THEY CONTINUE TO SHOW SOME DEGREE OF UNEASE CONCERNING THE IMPACT WHICH THESE DEVELOPMENTS MAY HAVE ON THE SCHMIDT GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO MOVE FORWARD IN ITS RELATIONS WITH THE GDR. THERE WAS ALSO INITIALLY CONSIDERABLE WORRY AMONG SEVERAL OF OUR CONTACTS THAT THE PUBLICATION OF THE "MANIFESTO" WOULD SERIOUSLY ERODE THE INTERNAL GDR CLIMATE AND LEAD TO HARSHER OFFICIAL TREATMENT OF DISSIDENTS IN THE GDR. THIS INITIAL CONCERN MAY HAVE EASED SOMEWHAT WITH THE PASSAGE OF TIME BUT WE STILL DETECT A SENSE OF LINGERING UNEASE CONCERNING THE COURSE OF INTERNAL GOVERNMENT POLICIES HERE. AT THE SAME TIME, WITH THE POSSIBLE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BERLIN 01276 04 OF 05 211716Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 TRSE-00
IO-13 ACDA-12 CU-04 HA-05 BIB-01 COME-00 EB-08
LAB-04 SIL-01 /103 W
-----108364 211742Z /50

R 211601Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6769
INFO AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USIA WASHDC
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
USMISSION USBERLIN
USMISSION USNATO
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 04 OF 05 BERLIN 01276

EXCEPTION OF THE FRG PERMANENT MISSION, WE HAVE NOT NOTICED
ANY INCREASED RELUCTANCE BY EAST GERMANS TO MAINTAIN THEIR
CONTACTS WITH OTHER EMBASSIES OR WITH OURSELVES.

7. THE DURABILITY OF RUDOLF BAHRO.
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BERLIN 01276 04 OF 05 211716Z

GIVEN THE HIGHLY TOPICAL NATURE OF THE "MANIFESTO" AFFAIR,
IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT MOST OF OUR RECENT DISCUSSIONS WITH
UNOFFICIAL EAST GERMAN CONTACTS HAVE DWELT FAR MORE ON THE

WRITINGS OF RUDOLF BAHRO THAN ON THE "MANIFESTO". IN FACT, DISCUSSIONS OF THE SHORTCOMINGS OF THE "MANIFESTO" SEEM TO LEAD NATURALLY INTO A MORE PROLONGED AND SERIOUS CONVERSATION ABOUT BAHRO. IN THE EYES OF MANY OF OUR NON-PARTY CONTACTS, BAHRO IS EVERYTHING THAT THE AUTHORS OF THE "MANIFESTO" ARE NOT: IDEOLOGICALLY RIGOROUS, THEORETICALLY SOUND, SKILLED IN ECONOMICS, COMPREHENSIVE IN TREATMENT, PERSONALLY COMMITTED AND COURAGEOUS. GIVEN THE LENGTH AND COMPLEXITY OF BAHRO'S WORK (AND HIS IMPENETRABLE WRITING STYLE), IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE THAT, APART FROM REGIME EFFORTS TO PRECLUDE ITS DISTRIBUTION HERE, IT HAS TAKEN SOME TIME FOR HIS WRITINGS TO BE DISSIMINATED, DIGESTED AND DISCUSSED. IF ANYTHING, HOWEVER, WE HAVE DETECTED OVER A PERIOD OF SEVERAL MONTHS A STEADY AND SERIOUS INTEREST AMONG OUR EAST GERMAN CONTACTS IN BAHRO AND HIS VIEWS. BAHRO'S ESSENTIAL ROLE APPEARS TO US TO BE IN PROVIDING A FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH MANY SERIOUS IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS CAN TAKE PLACE. THIS IS NOT TO SAY THAT HIS IDEAS AND PROPOSALS HAVE MET WITH UNIVERSAL AGREEMENT; HOWEVER, HE SEEMS TO CONSTITUTE A FOCUS FOR DEBATE FOR MANY PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT VIEWPOINTS WHO ARE CRITICAL OF THE STATE OF SOCIALISM IN THE GDR. AMONG OUR CONTACTS IT IS CLEAR THAT ONE NEED NOT BE A COMMITTED MARXIST IN ORDER TO TAKE A SERIOUS INTEREST IN RUDOLF BAHRO.

8. BAHRO THE CRITIC.

THE DISCUSSIONS CONCERNING BAHRO WHICH WE HAVE HEARD HAVE FREQUENTLY INVOLVED A CONSIDERABLE DEGREE OF IDEOLOGICAL DETAIL AND MARXIST DOGMATIC HAIR-SPLITTING. THIS WILLING-CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BERLIN 01276 04 OF 05 211716Z

NESS TO DEAL WITH BAHRO ON A CHAPTER-AND-VERSE BASIS SEEMS TO US TO REFLECT THE SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH HE IS VIEWED AS A SOCIALIST THEORETICIAN. IT IS QUITE COMMON TO HEAR HIS NAME IN THE SAME CONTEXT AND WITH THE SAME STATUS AS HAVEMANN AND HARICH, TWO OF THE SENIOR STATESMEN OF EAST GERMAN DISSENT. THIS IS ESPECIALLY NOTEWORTHY IN THAT BAHRO WAS UNKNOWN (EVEN TO HAVEMANN) BEFORE THE PUBLICATION OF HIS BOOK AND HIS ARREST. WE HAVE HEARD PRAISE FOR BAHRO AS AN ECONOMIST AND TECHNOCRAT WITH SUFFICIENT MARXIST THEORETICAL TRAINING TO COME TO GRIPS WITH SOME OF THE INCONSISTENCIES BETWEEN 19TH CENTURY MARXIST DOGMA AND THE REALITIES OF THE 20TH CENTURY SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY. IT IS NOT ALWAYS FELT THAT BAHRO HAS THE RIGHT ANSWERS, BUT THAT HE HAS ASKED MANY OF THE RIGHT QUESTIONS AND HAS AT LEAST TRIED TO GRAPPLE WITH DILEMMAS WHICH THE PARTY TENDS TO SWEEP UNDER THE IDEOLOGICAL RUG. IN THIS REGARD MANY OF OUR CONTACTS CONFESS TO BEING UNABLE TO UNDERSTAND SOME OF BAHRO'S MORE OBTUSE ECONOMIC ARGUMENTS,

BUT TO BEING IMPRESSED WITH HIS WILLINGNESS TO WADE INTO SUCH A TORTUOUS THICKET. BAHRO'S WILLINGNESS TO GO BACK TO MARXIST BASICS AND HIS REJECTION OF MUCH OF THE LENINIST-STALINIST IMPRINT ON EAST GERMAN SOCIALISM HAVE ALSO BEEN WELL RECEIVED.

9. BAHRO THE MAN.

BAHRO ALSO APPEARS TO HAVE ATTRACTED A VERY CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF SYMPATHY AS AN INDIVIDUAL. HIS WILLINGNESS TO PROCLAIM PUBLICLY HIS AUTHORSHIP OF "DIE ALTERNATIVE" RATHER THAN SEE IT GO UNPUBLISHED AND HIS STOICAL ACCEPTANCE OF THE INEVITABILITY OF HIS OWN ARREST ARE ADMIRABLE AMONG EAST GERMANS WITH WHOM WE HAVE SPOKEN. SEVERAL NON-MARXIST EVANGELICAL PASTORS HAVE DRAWN PARALLELS BETWEEN SOME OF BAHRO'S VIEWS AND BASIC CHRISTIAN BELIEFS. THE FIRST OF THESE IS BAHRO'S

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BERLIN 01276 05 OF 05 211727Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 TRSE-00
IO-13 ACDA-12 CU-04 HA-05 BIB-01 COME-00 EB-08
LAB-04 SIL-01 /103 W

-----108463 211740Z /50

R 211601Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6770
INFO AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USIA WASHDC
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
USMISSION USBERLIN
USMISSION USNATO
AMCONSUL BREMEN
AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF
AMCONSUL FRANKFURT
AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMCONSUL STUTTGART

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 05 OF 05 BERLIN 01276

VIEW THAT ANY EFFORT TO CHANGE OR IMPROVE SOCIETY MUST
BEGIN WITH THE INDIVIDUAL AND THAT THE INDIVIDUAL IN
SOCIETY CANNOT REFUSE HIS OWN RESPONSIBILITY IN THIS
REGARD. SECONDLY, THE COMMITTED INDIVIDUAL MUST BE WHOLLY
DEDICATED AND BE WILLING TO ACCEPT THE RISKS AND POSSIBLE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BERLIN 01276 05 OF 05 211727Z

CONSEQUENCES OF HIS EFFORTS TO CHALLENGE AN AUTHORITARIAN
STATE. THESE ATTITUDES REFLECT THE REASONS WHY BAHRO IS
WIDELY REGARDED BY PEOPLE WHO NEVER MET HIM AS A REAL
"MENSCH" AS WELL AS AN INTELLECTUALLY RESPECTABLE POLITI-
CAL AND ECONOMIC WRITER. AT THE SAME TIME, THIS SYMPATHY
AND PASSIVE SUPPORT HAVE NOT RESULTED IN ANY ACTIVE OR
ORGANIZED EFFORTS TO ASSIST BAHRO OF WHICH WE ARE AWARE.

10. IN OUR DISCUSSIONS WE HAVE HEARD THAT BAHRO WAS NOT
ALONE IN HIS EFFORTS. IT IS RUMORED THAT HE
WAS ASSOCIATED WITH A FORMER PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY
WHO CONTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE THEORETICAL SECTIONS
OF "DIE ALTERNATIVE" AND WHO WAS ARRESTED AT THE SAME
TIME AS BAHRO. IT IS FURTHER RUMORED THAT BAHRO HAS BEEN
REFUSED ACCESS TO A LAWYER AND THAT DR. VOGEL UNSUCCESS-
FULLY ATTEMPTED TO EXCHANGE BAHRO FOR GUENTER GUILLAUME IN
SEPTEMBER 1977. WE HAVE HEARD FROM AN EMPLOYEE OF
BAHRO'S FORMER RUBBER FACTORY THAT, AFTER HIS ARREST, THERE
WAS A MEETING CALLED BY HIS COLLEAGUES TO SHOW
SYMPATHY FOR HIM. FROM OUR RECENT CONVERSATIONS IT SEEMS
APPARENT THAT THIS SYMPATHY AND THE INTEREST IN BAHRO'S
WRITINGS ARE QUITE WIDESPREAD AMONG EDUCATED AND INTERESTED
EAST GERMANS AND THAT HE REMAINS ONE OF THE MOST FREQUENT
TOPICS OF POLITICAL CONVERSATION IN THIS COUNTRY.

11. SOME RESERVATIONS.

A NOTE OF CAUTION PERHAPS NEEDS TO BE SOUNDED AT THIS
POINT. OUR CONTACTS ARE WITH A FAIRLY NARROW SPECTRUM OF
EAST GERMANS, PRINCIPALLY THOSE WHO ARE WELL EDUCATED,
EMPLOYED IN THE PROFESSIONS AND WITH AN ACTIVE INTEREST
IN POLITICAL AND IDEOLOGICAL QUESTIONS. IT WOULD BE FAR
TOO MUCH TO ATTRIBUTE THE VIEWS AND ATTITUDES OF THIS
GROUP TO THE EAST GERMAN POPULATION AS A WHOLE. IN FACT,
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BERLIN 01276 05 OF 05 211727Z

WHEN WE HAVE ASKED OUR CONTACTS WHAT THEY AVERAGE EAST GERMAN WORKER OR FARMER THINKS ABOUT THE "MANIFESTO" OR BAHRO, WE ARE USUALLY TOLD THAT THEY DON'T THINK OR KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THEM. THE COMMON THEME WE HAVE HEARD IS THAT THE AVERAGE EAST GERMAN, MALE AND FEMALE, MUST WORK SO HARD FOR SUCH LONG PERIODS DURING THE DAY THAT THEY COME HOME EXHAUSTED WITH NO INTEREST OTHER THAN IN WATCHING SOME NON-POLITICAL PROGRAMS ON WESTERN TELEVISION OR SPORTS EVENTS VIA EAST GERMAN BROADCASTS. WHAT TIME AND INCLINATION REMAIN GOES INTO PERSONAL , FAMILY OR LOCAL PROBLEMS. WE ARE TOLD THAT "MR. X, Y AND Z" IN THE GDR ARE SO ALIENATED FROM POLITICS IN GENERAL AND FACE SUCH HEAVY DEMANDS ON THEIR TIME AND ENERGY AS TO PRECLUDE ANY ACTIVE INTEREST IN ANYTHING OTHER THAN IMPROVING THEIR MATERIAL WELFARE. POLANSKY

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLICATIONS, PARTY LINE, ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, OPPOSITION PARTIES, PUBLIC ATTITUDES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BERLIN01276
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780078-0356
Format: TEL
From: BERLIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780234/aaaabcsv.tel
Line Count: 618
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 400d61d3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 12
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 BERLIN 6984, 77 BERLIN 7021, 78 BERLIN 24, 78 BERLIN 202, 78 BERLIN 236, 78 BERLIN 312
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3540941
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: WHAT DO EAST GERMANS THINK ABOUT THE SPIEGEL "MANIFESTO" AND RUDOLF BAHRO? CONFIDENTIAL
TAGS: PGOV, GC, GE, (BAHRO, RUDOLF)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/400d61d3-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014